



COVAXIN'S EARLY TRIALS SHOW PROMISING RESULTS

Bharat Biotech's coronavirus vaccine has shown dual immune response, according to phase 1 & 2 results released on Wednesday

VACCINE CANDIDATE CURRENTLY IN PHASE-3

The vaccine has proceeded to phase 3 trial and the company has planned to test it in 26,000 individuals aged between 12 and 65 years across several states in the country. The Hyderabad-based firm, which has developed the vaccine in collaboration with the ICMR, has already sought emergency use approval from the Drug Controller General of India

HIGH ANTIBODIES IN PHASE-1 VOLUNTEERS

In a double-blind, multi-centre, phase 2 clinical trial, 380 healthy individuals were randomised to receive two vaccine formulations and two intramuscular doses of vaccines four weeks apart
In a follow-up of the phase 1 trial, Covaxin produced high levels of neutralising antibodies that remained elevated in all participants

6-12 months
RESEARCHERS CLAIM COVAXIN'S ANTIBODIES COULD LAST THAT LONG

India told to pay ₹10K cr damages to Cairn Energy

The arbitration tribunal said the govt breached treaty obligations

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

BARELY three months after Vodafone Plc won an international arbitration against India's ₹22,100 crore retrospective tax demand, the country on Wednesday suffered another blow arising from the controversial 2012 amendment to its tax laws.

This time, a three-member arbitration tribunal under the Permanent Court of Arbitration, The Hague, has directed India to pay UK-based energy giant Cairn \$1.2 billion in damages, along with interest and legal costs. The final amount India would have to pay if it doesn't challenge the award is likely to be \$1.4 billion (over ₹10,300 crore), say sources.

"The tribunal ruled unanimously that India had breached its obligations to Cairn under the UK-India Bilateral Investment Treaty," the company said in a statement on Wednesday.

The Government of India,



Image source: Twitter

for its part, said that it "will be studying the award and all its aspects carefully in consultation with its counsels".

After the UPA-led government lost its case against Vodafone Plc at the Supreme Court in 2012, then finance minister Pranab Mukherjee passed an amendment in law making the tax liability retrospective.

In March 2015, Cairn was

slapped with ₹10,247 crore retrospective tax demand over gains from an internal reorganisation implemented in 2006-07. But unlike the Vodafone Plc case, where no overt action was taken by both the UPA and the subsequent NDA governments, Cairn's holdings were seized and then subsequently sold to realise the tax liability.

By 2011, Cairn Energy Plc had already sold its India subsidiary, Cairn India, to Vedanta Ltd, retaining only a 5% stake. But after the tax demand and subsequent initiation of arbitration by the company in 2015, GoI seized the stake and sold it to realise the claim.

It also seized dividends totalling ₹1,140 crore due to Cairn and set off a ₹1,590-crore tax refund against the demand.

90 DAYS TO FILE APPEAL

Govt has 90 days to mount an appeal against the order, say sources. In the case of Vodafone, this runs out on December 24 and no appeal has been filed yet. For Cairn, if it doesn't challenge the award, the cash outflow is set to be over ₹10,300 crore

Negotiation ball back in Centre's court as farmers seek concrete ideas

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi/Chandigarh

THE weeks-long deadlock over the new farm laws continued on Wednesday with farmer unions demanding that the Union government offer concrete proposals, abandon its stubbornness and accept their demands to end their agitation. Both sides have now indicated they are ready for talks without budging on their core agenda.

After a meeting of their umbrella body, the Sanyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), farmer leaders said they were ready for talks but are waiting for the Centre to come to the table with an open mind. In a letter addressed to Vivek Aggarwal, Joint Secretary in the Union Agriculture Ministry, they said there was no clarity on various sticking points like guaranteeing the minimum support price mechanism, electricity amendment (ordinance) and ordinance on air quality.

The Centre is already on record as saying it is ready to discuss and address all concerns of the agitating farmers. And Prime Minister Narendra Modi will continue his outreach by interacting with farmers from six states on Friday. The day will also see nine crore farmers receiving ₹18,000 crore in their bank accounts through direct transfer as part of PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana.

"We urge the government not to repeat the meaningless



Farmers gesture during their ongoing protest against the new farm sector reform laws, at the Singhu border in Delhi on Wednesday | PARYEN NIGI

Committed to reforms

Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said the government will continue with reforms in the farm sector. "However old and strong the protest is, a solution can be arrived at only through talks," he said

amendments we have already rejected but come up with a concrete proposal in writing so that the process of negotiation can be started as soon as possible," Swaraj Abhiyan chief Yogendra Yadav said. He is a member of the SKM.

"The government is constantly holding talks with so-called farmer leaders and organisa-

tions who are not associated with our movement. This is an attempt to break our movement. It is dealing with protesting farmers, the way it deals with the Opposition," Yadav added.

Rashtriya Kisan Mazdoor Mahasangh president Shiv Kumar Kakka said: "The government should abandon its stubbornness and create conducive environment for talks with protesting farmers and accept their demands. We have already told Union Home Minister Amit Shah that protesting farmers will not accept amendments."

All India Kisan Sabha leader Hannan Mollah alleged that the government wants to delay this resolution of the agitation and break the morale of the farmers.

WHAT IT MEANS

All activities will go on as usual from 5 am to 11 pm

No venturing out after 11 pm; guidelines soon

Those arriving at Bengaluru or Mangaluru airports from abroad must have RT-PCR Covid-19 negative certificate obtained 72 hours before their departure

Arrangements made at KIA to conduct tests; health staff to ensure no one enters Bengaluru without getting tested

UK returnees screened

Several UK returnees to Karnataka have been tested. Seven passengers in Mysuru, 6 in Mandya, 8 in Chitradurga and 7 in Davanagere are being monitored.

After flip-flop, night curfew from today in K'taka till Jan 2

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

A day after denying that night curfew will be imposed in Karnataka, Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on Wednesday did a U-turn and announced its imposition from December 24, 2020 to January 2, 2021. The curfew will be in force between 11 pm and 5 am. However, Christmas midnight mass will be permitted, although guidelines on crowds restrictions and Covid-19 safety norms will have to be followed, the CM tweeted.

The decision to impose the night curfew was taken on the advice of the Technical Advi-

sory Committee (TAC) as a precautionary measure amid concerns over the new Covid-19 strain spreading from the UK, which is believed to be 70 per cent more infectious. Karnataka is the second state after Maharashtra to announce night curfew.

Earlier in the day, CM had announced that night curfew will be imposed from Wednesday night itself and that it will be from 10 pm to 6 am on January 2. This was later changed after representatives of commercial establishments appealed to the CM to extend the time-

ings. Federation of Karnataka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FKCCI) president Perikall M Sundar appealed to the CM that shutting down at 10 pm will cause losses to businesses, and urged him to enforce the curfew from 11 pm instead.

"This (night curfew) has been imposed to prevent and contain the spread of the coronavirus strain found in the UK, and we are also monitoring international passengers arriving in the state," Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar said, while adding that there will be no ban on inter-state travel.



Pruned Class 10 syllabus by Jan 6: Minister

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE truncated syllabus for Class 10 will be announced by January 6, and the time-table for both Classes 10 and 12 board examinations will also be announced by then, Primary and Secondary Education Minister has said.

In an exclusive interaction with The New Indian Express on Wednesday, he said although Class 12 syllabus has been cut by 30 per cent on the lines of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), for the SSLC syllabus, it will take a few days to work out precisely how much and what to cut without hurting sentiments or affecting the future prospects of students.



For now, the department has decided against having exams in March-April. We need to give the children reasonable time to learn and go through the syllabus and be confident. We cannot play with their lives

S Suresh Kumar, Primary and Secondary Education Minister

Explaining why it will take so many days to finalise the trimmed syllabus, he said they were trying to achieve two objectives — that minimum necessary learning for Class 10 students should not be affected and students should not feel the loss when they enter PUC; and two, unnecessary subjects should be avoided. "This is possible in most subjects, because we have spiral learning where we learn the same subject in Classes 8, 9 and 10. This is avoidable, but there is a catch — sentiments will be hurt and it becomes a touchy subject as to why the content was dropped," he said.

The minister said the shrunk Class 10 syllabus will

retain the essentials required to be learnt while also ensuring that repetitive content from previous two years are cut.

The department was in a sticky situation after the last attempt in cutting down the syllabus as they were criticized for hurting the sentiments of some sections while deleting certain chapters. The minister assured that this year, the syllabus cut will be foolproof, controversy-free and will allow students to have reasonably sufficient syllabus as well as time to prepare.

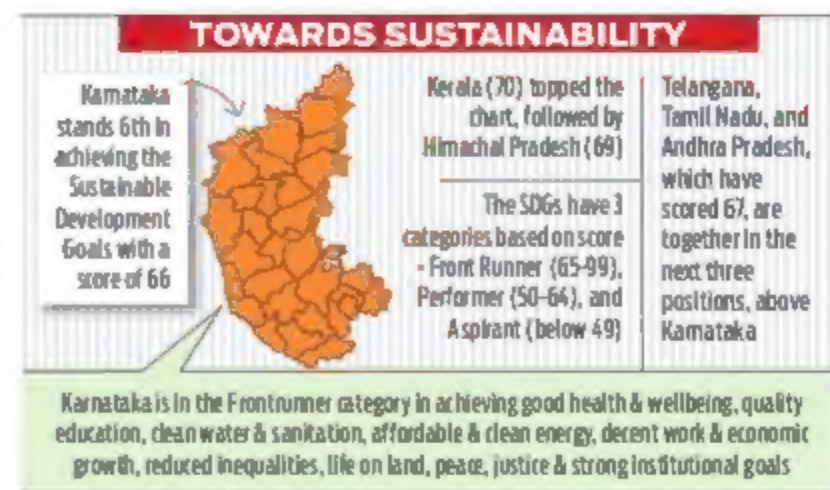
Although classes will start on January 1, students will have just four classes per day and there will not be sufficient time.

Karnataka ranked sixth in UN sustainable development goals

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KARNATAKA has been ranked sixth in the country in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) set by the United Nations Organisation. However, it has scored low in achieving better results as regards goals such as poverty alleviation, zero hunger, gender equality and sustainable cities and communities.

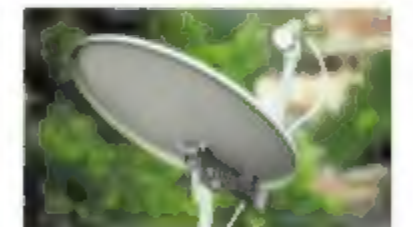
The report, 'Sustainable Development Goals-Vision 2030 — Strategies and Action Plan for Karnataka', was released by Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on Wednesday. It says the state achieved 52 on a scale of 100 for 'Poverty' — below the national average of 54. "Increasing the coverage of social protection at a faster rate to reach the target of 100% by 2030, coverage of construction and the informal sector where



women are largely employed, target-oriented anti-poverty package of schemes and programmes, cent percent coverage of all Below Poverty Line holders, redesigning and repackaging Self Help Group (SHG) programmes through convergence, skilling and marketing initiatives are the way forward," the report stated.

The state scored 54, slightly above the national average of 48, in the 'Zero Hunger' goal. The report recommended ensuring nutrition security and addressing low productivity in agriculture. In 'Gender Equality', Karnataka scored 43 against the national average of 36.

CONTINUED ON P4



100% FDI in DTH sector, 20-yr licence

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

THE Union Cabinet on Wednesday cleared the Information and Broadcasting Ministry's revised guidelines allowing 100% FDI in direct-to-home (DTH) sector and doubling licence validity to 20 years. Earlier, I&B ministry allowed only 49% foreign direct investment in the sector.

Among the other changes is licence fee will be collected on a quarterly basis instead of annually, to make it in tune with the licence fee regime of the telecom sector.

Also, DTH operators will be permitted to operate a maximum of 5% of their total channel carrying capacity as platform channels.

"In India, more than six crore houses get DTH services. The commerce ministry had earlier decided 100% FDI in DTH services but the services could not get that benefit as Information and Broadcasting Ministry's guidelines allowed only 49% FDI. The new guidelines will be in sync with the Commerce ministry's guidelines," Union minister Prakash Javadekar said.

Welcoming the new guidelines, leading DTH player Tata Sky said the decision to grant licences to the operators for 20 years will provide certainty to the industry.

EXPRESS READ

Infy shares gain nearly 3pc after Daimler deal

New Delhi: Shares of Infosys closed with nearly 3% gains on Wednesday after it said it has formed a partnership with Daimler AG for a tech-driven IT infra transformation | P15

Abhaya murder: Priest, nun get life term

T'Puram: A CBI special court on Wednesday awarded life imprisonment to the catholic priest and nun, who were found guilty of murdering Sister Abhaya | P7

FACE IT

Full declaration of ingredients not cosmetic, made mandatory

SUMI SUKANYA OUTTA @ New Delhi

IT has now become mandatory for manufacturers of cosmetics and make-up products in India to declare all ingredients, even those with concentration of less than 1%, to help buyers make more informed choices.

Thus far, there was no Central law mandating them to declare the full composition of their skin and make-up products — though there is such a rule for drugs — and licences

were granted without getting detailed information.

In order to ensure greater quality control of cosmetic products being manufactured, imported and used in India, the government has also decided to set up the first Central Cosmetics Laboratory and appoint inspectors across states. Till now, there have been very few instances of crackdown on makers of spurious cosmetics.

Under the new cosmetics rules, 2020 notified by the Union



ministry of health and family welfare recently following consultations with the drug technical advisory board, hair dyes

containing paraphenylenediamine or other dyes, colours and pigments should be labelled with specified warnings. Special provisions have been introduced on fluoride content in toothpaste as well. It should not be more than 1000 ppm and the fluoride content shall be mentioned on the tube and carton.

According to the new norms, no cosmetic, the manufacture, sale or distribution of which is prohibited in the country of origin, can be imported. Also

on the import ban list are cosmetics containing hexachlorophene — a chemical preservative known for harmful effects on humans.

Besides, cosmetics tested on animals cannot be imported. Also, inspectors will be required to inspect at least once in three years all premises licensed to manufacture cosmetics to ensure that the provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetic Act, 1940 and its rules are being fully met.